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Shiprock Airport Undergoes Temporary Closure Due to Airplane Accident



A tow company removes the airplane from a field adjacent to the runway at Shiprock Airport on Thursday evening. It took the tow crew over two hours to move the airplane to the apron.

April 1, Shiprock, NM – At approximately 11:35 AM MDT on Thursday, March 31, 2016 a Cessna 180D airplane with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) registry number N180XV became involved in an accident at the Shiprock Airport.

The pilot, Joe Tumminaro, departed Durango, CO with a passenger, Ryan Arroyo, Thursday morning. According to the Daily Times, Mr. Tumminaro was practicing touch-and-go landing at the airport when high winds blew his plane upside down sometime during the descent. When the plane came to rest, the top of the fuselage and wings of the high-wing aircraft were settled on the ground.

When Navajo Nation police reported to the scene, they found Mr. Arroyo, free from the plane. Mr.

Tumminaro was still secured in the aircraft.

At the scene, Mr. Tumminaro was treated for chest pain and immobilized to prevent any potential neck or head injuries. He was eventually evacuated by helicopter to San Juan Regional Medical Center. Mr. Tumminaro is currently in serious condition at the hospital.

Later, Mr. Arroyo was examined at the same hospital.

The FAA became aware of the incident at 11:47 AM MDT. At approximately 2:20 PM MDT Navajo DOT personnel contacted the FAA to issue a Notice to Airmen, or NOTAM. The NOTAM closed the airport until further notice due to debris on the runway.

After a private tow company

cleared the plane from the runway and its adjacent areas the plane was secured on the apron.

While the tow company removed the plane, Navajo DOT crews removed debris and cleared the runway. At approximately 7:20 PM MDT, Navajo DOT personnel contacted the FAA to cancel the NOTAM and indicate that the airport would reopen at 8:00 AM MDT on Friday, April 1, 2016.

A National Transportation Safety Board investigator will coordinate the investigation into this accident from their Chicago office. The FAA will also investigate the accident from their Albuquerque office.

Earlier this year, Navajo DOT completed the Navajo Nation Airport System Master Plan. The undertaking provides an outline for capital

improvements across the nation's six National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) listed airports. In regard to the Shiprock Airport, Navajo DOT is working with the FAA on a five-year capital improvement program. The program identifies runway rehabilitation and the installation of a lighting system as the first steps of the overhaul.

Navajo DOT thanks the agencies that responded to the accident, including the Navajo Nation Police, San Juan County Police and Emergency Services, New Mexico State Police, and San Juan Regional Medical Center.

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Far in the distance, Navajo DOT Department of Airport Management staff clear debris from the Shiprock Airport runway.